

Groucho Marx Termed Best TV Comedian

By JACK O'BRIAN

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NEW YORK—In this season of selection of the "bests" in TV, no use beating around the bush with our choice of a "best comedian," for he is Groucho Marx.

Television has been savagely hard on comedians, especially the last few seasons. Once we might not have believed it possible that any comedian with the vast popularity of Milton Berle could slide right out of the medium altogether in so short a time. Only two years ago Jackie Gleason was the Saturday night lord of all he surveyed and he surveyed far into the future and voiced sadness at what he was certain he would do to his pal Perry Como. Time told that tale and Jackie is a bitter Pagliacci today, pushed out of his old hour by his own network.

Sid Caesar is one of the best comic craftsmen in TV, and has the respect of his competitors and critics. Apparently the only ones who won't watch Sid are the public, at least in large enough lots to give him more than a vague rating.

Comics glow and fade in the flickering TV spotlight, and each season sees a Red Buttons unbolted from his passing success, a Johnny Carson lighting up the sky fitfully, passing on to disappointments, a Jonathan Winters with little beyond his scrap books full of eagerly written suggestions that he would be "next year's comedian."

Still, there are a few clowns left with class, such as Jack Benny or Burns & Allen, among the fairly brief list of old pros. These are folks whose careers have been permanently pleasing and well-deserved. They are graceful winners, not sore winners. They wear their success



DEBUT FOR STAR'S BABY—Cindy Frances Calhoun, six-week-old daughter of actor Rory Calhoun and wife, Lita Baron, is held by her parents as she arrived at her father's studio for a double camera debut. News cameramen

snapped this picture and then a few minutes later Cindy made her motion picture debut with a tiny part in "Ride Out for Revenge" in which Calhoun stars. Cindy slept through both appearances. (AP Photofax)

with the nonchalance of those long accustomed to it. And atop them all we place Groucho in our list.

There are only a few great "clowns" in any generation. Will Rogers, Fred Allen, W. C. Fields, Fannie Brice, Groucho Marx, Bobby Clark and Bert Lahr have been the "class" of our lifetime. Bobby Clark and Bert Lahr still are with us, although not practicing in TV presently. Only Groucho remains the immovable object of our television admiration, the irresistible force of fun in the newest entertainment medium of all.

Groucho's "You Bet Your Life" is unimportant as a quiz. It manages to dispense a comparatively piddling sum in this day of buying ratings by phony philanthropies. The valuable commodity in "You Bet Your Life" is Groucho alone. His virtuoso impudence remains at the top of the TV heap, and it hasn't changed much through the seasons, in point of view or the ratings. The show has a wonderfully lively level of lunacy, a built-in "style" the public knows and loves. Its habit pattern is Groucho; its always changing elements are the contestants; together they provide the consistently best comedy in television.

Star Once Translator

HOLLYWOOD—Cornel Wilde once made a living translating plays from German and Hungarian.

That sign stuck in the lawn at CBS-TV.

"Please do not pull the flowers."

a bus boy at Hollywood's Marquis restaurant between films. His dad owns the place.

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Charlie Chan Series To Be Shown On TV

HOLLYWOOD—(INS)—Sombere-faced Orientals, who have a reputation for having a non-sense-of-humor, may get a new lease on giggles when James Hong hits the TV screen as Charlie Chan's crazy Number One son.

Hong, a 28-year-old ex-civil-engineer, graduated to acting after success fully impersonating Groucho Marx on a television show.

"People think the Chinese and Japanese don't have a funny-bone," Hong declared. "They never get a chance to clown on the screen so this will be a good chance to show that we do have a sense of humor."

As the famed movie detective's Number One footsteps, Hong will follow in the footsteps of Chinese actors Keye Luke, Victor Sen Young and Vincent Fong, all of whom at one time or another gunned up the works for their movie Pa, Charlie Chan.

The television series, which is slated to be launched on American home screens sometime this Fall, is being shot in Hollywood, London, Paris and Rome.

The original "Charlie Chan" starring the late Warner Oland as Earl Derr Biggers' paunchy Oriental detective, first hit the motion picture screen 25 years ago.

Following Oland's death in 1938, the role was played by various other actors including Sidney Toler and Roland Winters. This will be the first time the stories have been set for TV.

"There'll be some changes made in the character of Chan," Hong said, "but the Number One son will remain essentially the same—slap-happy!"

The Minneapolis-born Chinese actor said his parents never wanted him to become an actor because they were afraid he would starve to death.

"There are so few roles for Orientals in television and motion pictures," he added, "that my family felt there was not enough incentive to give up a job in hand for a job in the bush league!"

"I only hope I can prove to them that this will be a 'steady' job!"

J. Carroll Naish, a non-Oriental, will take over the role of Chan. Instead of being on the staff of the Honolulu police force as the original Chan was, he will be a retired Chinese detective.

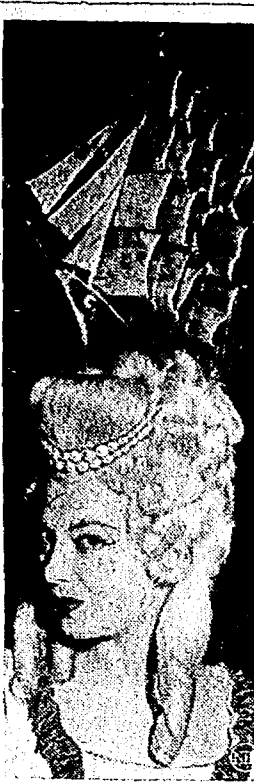
Belafonte Pulls Bongo Stunt

HOLLYWOOD—Harry Belafonte pulled a rib on "Desk Set," which flabbergasted Director Walter Lang, co-stars Katharine Hepburn and Gig Young. Miss Hepburn and Gig were rehearsing a scene in which Young's voice grows progressively louder until he has to shout to make himself heard over the sound of Spencer Tracy's beating of the bongo drums.

Director Arrives For Conferences

HOLLYWOOD—Director Joseph Anthony has arrived in Hollywood for conferences with producer Don Hartman on "The Matchmaker," production featuring Shirley Booth, Shirley MacLaine, Anthony Perkins and Paul Ford.

John Michael Hayes has written the screenplay, based on the Broadway hit by Thornton Wilder.



BREEZY—Made of human hair, a frigate under full sail is the crowning touch for this elaborate Parisian hairdo. Responsible for the creation is hair stylist Fernand Dupax.

Buster Champ Boat Sinker

HOLLYWOOD—If anyone anywhere is bent on sinking a boat with neatness and dispatch, Paramount and Buster Keaton can tell him how.

The studio and the frozen-face comic are joint and sole possessors of the information, and would freely make it available to any do-it-yourself individual whose purposes are honorable. Saboteurs and other would-be wrongdoers need not apply.

The thing was done twice for a key scene in "The Buster Keaton Story," starring Donald O'Connor (as Keaton), Ann Blythe and Rhonda Fleming, and directed by Sidney Sheldon.

Both times they tried it, at a small boat anchorage and repair yard on the Los Angeles harbor at Wilmington, Calif., the trick worked perfectly; the boat and Donald together sank without a trace. And were fished up afterward, of course, none the worse for wear.

It wasn't easy. Boats are buoyant things of their very nature, and reluctant to sink. Small boats made of wood, that is.

Brando Fiance's Parents Picked

HOLLYWOOD—Kent Smith and Martha Scott portray the parents of Patricia Owens, Marlon Brando's fiancee in "Sayonara."

"Sunshine State"

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

ACROSS

1—"State" is another nickname of South Dakota

7 Its capital is

13 Idolized

14 These are popular here

15 Classified

17 The Black Hills

18 River is in this state

20 Mariner's direction

21 Pausers

23 Number

28 Redactors

32 English river

33 Frenchman's Paris

34 Violin maker

35 Prattle

36 Italian gulf

39 Lamprey

40 Perusers

42 Malt drink

45 Writing tool

46 Eccentric

49 Sell in small lots

52 Bridge holding

55 The—of its

Indians is colorful

56 Eluded

57 Cable meters

58 Withdraw

DOWN

1 House (Sp.)

2 Smell

3 Time long since past

4 Worthless

5 Golf mound

6 Icelandic sagas

7 Babbled

8 Charged atom

9 Dutch city

10 Units of reluctance

11 Fish eggs

12 Essential being

13 Follower

14 Leaser

15 All

16 Tears

17 Looks fixedly

18 Depots (ab.)

19 Feminine

20 Calm meat

21 Verbal

22 Pileus

23 Southsayer

24 Italian city

25 Poem

26 —its Bad

27 Lands with

28 due caution

29 Brazilian

30 macaws

31 Native of

32 Calm event

33 Native of

34 Calm event

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